

SHROPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

FIRE SAFETY ADVICE SHEET

SAFE USE OF LIQUID PETROLEUM GAS (LPG) PATIO HEATERS

INTRODUCTION

Outdoor radiant patio heaters using LPG cylinders are becoming increasingly popular, both for commercial and domestic use. These heaters are safe if looked after properly, serviced and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

This advice sheet sets out some basic safety rules which should be observed by users.

SITING AND USE

- Patio heaters are for outdoor use only. Combustion products from the heaters are very hot and on no account should they be used in enclosed spaces or inside tents/marquees or close to umbrellas.
- Assembly of heaters should be carried out by a competent person in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and then tested before use to ensure they are gas tight and operate correctly.
- LPG cylinders should be of the correct type for the heater; i.e. propane or butane of a size specified by the manufacturers
- The gas pressure and type should be specified in the manufacturer's instructions (normally 28mbar butane or 37mbar propane). An appropriate regulator must be fitted using hose complying with BS 3212/2 and suitable clips. Your local LPG dealer will be able to give advice
- Heaters may be used under awnings but only if expressly permitted by the manufacturer's instructions. Awnings should not impede the escape of combustion products.
- Care should be taken when positioning heaters near terraces or balconies to ensure the products of combustion do not adversely affect people or property at burner level.
- If a free standing heater appears unstable in high wind, the gas should be turned off at the cylinder valve, the cylinder disconnected and removed and the heater moved to a position out of the wind.

- Heaters should be positioned in areas shielded from the wind.
- Heaters should not be moved when alight.
- Heaters should be regularly serviced by a competent person in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, particularly after prolonged periods in storage.

NOTE

It is a legal requirement for heaters supplied by landlords for use at their premises to be safety checked at intervals not exceeding 12 month. The check should only be carried out by a CORGI registered installer under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.

Definition of the term 'landlord' can be found in Regulation 36 of the above Regulations

SAFE HANDLING AND USE OF L.P. GAS

LP Gas is a colourless liquid which readily evaporates into gas. It is odourless, although it will normally have an odour added to help detect leaks. It can burn or explode when it is mixed with air and meets an ignition source. It is heavier than air and tends to sink towards the ground. It can flow long distances along the ground and can collect in drains, gullies and cellars.

The safe handling and use of LP Gas cylinders is essential as a common cause of damage and potential danger arises from mishandling. Any guidance given by the manufacturer/supplier at the time of purchase should be strictly complied with. In addition, the following advice should be adhered to-:

- Cylinders damaged in any way should be returned to the supplier as soon as possible.
- Cylinders should be changed in the open air.

When changing gas cylinders-:

- Check that the replacement cylinder is the correct type for the appliance
- Extinguish/remove any naked flames or other ignition sources
- Ensure the valve on the empty cylinder is closed before disconnecting the heater
- Do not open the valve on the replacement cylinder until the connection to the heater is secure
- Look for any gas leaks. Suspected leaks can usually be detected by smell or by 'frosting' at the point of escape. If in doubt, check by applying a soapy water solution around all the suspect joint, fittings and pipework.

Do not test for leaks using a naked flame. If the leakage cannot be stopped, turn the cylinder off at the main valve and leave in the open air in a safe place remote from any drains or potential ignition sources, taking care to keep the point of leakage uppermost

- The condition of the flexible hose connecting the regulator to the heater inlet should be inspected for cracks, splitting or other deterioration each time the cylinder is changed. If damaged, it should be replaced with a new hose complying with BS 3212/2
- Store any spare cylinders upright and outside where possible. Never store them in basements, near drains, under stairs or in cupboards containing electrical equipment

Further information and advice can be obtained from The LP Gas Association at www.lpga.co.uk

Or for general fire safety matters, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service can be reached on **01743 260260** or via our web site at **www.shropshirefire.gov.uk**